

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the present specification as follows, according to the version which has been published as US 2002/0165296 A1:

Please replace paragraph [0012], on page 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0012] These and other objects, which will become readily apparent to those skilled in the art after reading this specification, have been accomplished by inventing a polymeric composition which comprises polymerizable units derived from at least one C₈ to C₃₀ alkyl (meth)acrylate monomer, and at least one chain branching unit, said chain branching unit present in an amount not greater than 0.10 weight percent based on total weight of the polymeric composition. The presence of the chain branching unit ~~surprisingly~~ surprisingly results in the polymeric composition having non-gelled polymer chains, ~~said non-gelled polymer chains~~ and having a weight average molecular weight of at least 100,000 g/mol.

Please replace paragraph [0015], on page 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0015] ~~b) at least one chain~~ b) at least one chain branching units derived from at least one chain branching monomer having two or more reactive sites, said chain branching units being present in an amount not greater than 0.10 weight percent based on total weight of the C₈ to C₃₀ alkyl (meth)acrylate monomer,

Please replace paragraph [0016], on page 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0016] wherein said chain branching units result[[s]] in the polymeric composition having non-gelled polymer chains, and wherein said ~~non-gelled polymer chains have~~ polymeric composition has a weight average molecular weight of at least 100,000 g/mol.

Please replace paragraph [0021], on page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0021] ii) ~~at least one~~ chain branching units derived from at least one chain branching monomer having two or more reactive sites, said chain branching units being present in an amount not greater than 0.10 weight percent based on total weight of the C₈ to C₃₀ alkyl (meth)acrylate monomer,

Please replace paragraph [0022], on page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0022] wherein said chain branching units result[[s]] in the polymeric composition having non-gelled polymer chains, and wherein said ~~non-gelled polymer chains have~~ polymeric composition has a weight average molecular weight of at least 100,000 g/mol.

Please replace paragraph [0023], on page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0023] In yet another embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of polymer particles comprising a polymeric composition having non-gelled polymer chains, said process comprising the steps of:

Please replace paragraph [0026], on page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0026] ii) at least one chain branching monomer having two or more reactive sites, said chain branching monomer present in an amount not greater than 0.10 weight percent based on total weight of the C₈ to C₃₀ alkyl (meth)acrylate monomer, and

Please replace paragraph [0028], on page 2, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0028] b) polymerizing said C₈ to C₃₀ alkyl (meth)acrylate monomer with said at least one chain branching monomer using at least one free radical initiator, wherein said ~~chain branching monomer results in the polymer particles comprising non-gelled polymer chains, and wherein~~

~~said non-gelled polymer chains have~~ polymeric composition has a weight average molecular weight of at least 100,000 g/mol.

Please replace paragraph [0046], on page 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0046] The molecular weight of the polymeric compositions according to the present invention is typically at least 100,000 g/mol, more typically at least 200,000 g/mol, and even more typically at least 500,000 g/mol. While there is no upper limit to the molecular weight, a practical upper limit is when all of the polymer chains are crosslinked or gelled. In ensuring that non-gelled polymer chains are present, the molecular weight of the polymeric compositions will typically be less than 3,000,000 g/mol, more typically less than 2,000,000 g/mol, and even more typically less than 1,500,000 g/mol.

Please replace paragraphs [00132] & [133] of Example 5, on pages 10 and 11, with the following rewritten and new paragraphs:

[0132] This example shows how the Jratio of polypropylene blends, degree of gelling, and molecular weight varies with the relative amount of chain branching monomer in the emulsion monomer mixtures. This example shows that the weight percentage of chain branching monomer should be no more than 0.10 weight percent based in amount of high-alkyl (meth)acrylate, since this amount of chain branching monomer results in production of polymeric compositions having no gel (i.e., having non-gelled polymer chains).

[0133] Three-stage polymer particles comprising the polymeric composition of the present invention as the core stage, were provided according generally to the process described in Example 1 with varying amounts of ALMA chain branching monomers. The polymer particles were prepared from Stage I LMA-based polymer particles, thermal stabilizer, and a flow aid as provided in Example 3. The polymer particles were first tested for the presence of gelled polymer chains as follows.

A fixed amount of the polymeric composition to be tested (in the form of dry solid material) is placed in tetrahydrofurane ("THF") at room temperature. THF is chosen because it is known to be a good solvent for these types of materials, but other solvents, such as toluene or similar solvents can be used. Preferably, the polymeric composition makes up about 5 to 10 % by weight of the total mixture of solvent and polymeric composition. For example, 9.5 grams of THF and 0.5 grams of solid material are added together to make a 10-gram blend. The mixture is placed in a tightly sealed vial and placed in a shaking device that shakes the mixture for several hours, preferably overnight (for example, from 8 to 12 hours) to ascertain that the mixture has reached equilibrium.

After the mixture has been treated as above, it is visually examined. A clear, fully homogeneous solution with no visible gelatinous material present will indicate that the polymeric composition is fully soluble and, therefore, it is made up of "non-gelled polymer chains". In contrast, a polymeric composition that contains "gelled polymer chains", which is not in accordance with the present invention, will produce a visible gelatinous substance in the mixture. This gelatinous substance is generally visually distinguishable in the mixture of solvent and polymeric composition because it consists of solid material which is swollen with solvent and behaves in a rubber-like manner. It can be further separated from the rest of the material by decanting off the supernatant solvent, by filtration, or by centrifugation of the solvent.

In many cases the original solvent-polymeric composition mixture splits into two parts: one containing gelatinous material ("gelled polymer chains") and supernatant solvent that contains soluble polymeric composition having "non-gelled polymeric chains" - in other words, the original solid polymeric composition contained both soluble ("non-gelled") and insoluble ("gelled") polymer chains. These two parts or components can be separated by either decanting, filtering or centrifuging the system. Further characterization of each phase (part) can then be carried out. Thermal analysis, etc. can be carried out in either part of the system by evaporating off the solvent. However, certain tests can be applied exclusively to the soluble phase (i.e., the supernatant solvent containing polymeric composition having non-gelled polymer chains) because only this portion the characteristics required to obtain trust-worthy test results. For example, molecular weight characterization by means of gel permeation chromatography (GPC) can be performed on the soluble phase only, because gelled material does not render reliable results from this test. For that reason, and to avoid the presence of gelled material and impurities in general, when GPC is performed, solutions are pre-filtered to obtain a free-flowing solution containing only polymeric composition having non-gelled polymer chains.

After being tested for the presence of gelled polymer chains, [[These]] the three-stage polymer particles comprising the polymeric composition of the present invention as the core stage, were blended at 5 % in polypropylene and tested for its Jratio according generally to the methods described in Example 3. Results indicated in the table below show that excessive gelled polymer in the polymeric composition results, apparently causing a reduction in the Jratio.

Please replace the table on page 11 that follows Example 5 and immediately precedes Example 6, with the following rewritten table:

Ex.	Chain Branching Monomer, %	Jratio	[[Notes]] <u>Results of Test for Presence of Gel</u>	Peak Average MW, g/mol	Weight Average MW, g/mol
5a	0.028	1.99	no gel apparent	746,000	1,100,000
5b	0.057	4.58	no gel apparent	844,000	1,270,000
5c	0.114	1.13	Gelled polymer chains present (5% in THF)	360,000 (soluble portion only)	747,000 (soluble portion only)